

FACT SHEET

SUBJECT: Counterfeit Hand-Held Fire Extinguishers

BACKGROUND:

- DLA HQ received e-mail from the Army about reported issues (known counterfeit fire extinguishers and non-functionality of those counterfeits) in April 2012.

DISCUSSION:

- There have been reports of dry chemical hand-held fire extinguishers falsely labeled as being manufactured by authentic manufacturers that have been found at various military bases (Air Force, Army & Marine bases) OCONUS in the past year.
 - Fire extinguishers are a “very” critical item, particularly when used on weapon systems that may be attacked using explosives, or that may come under enemy fire.
The fire extinguishers must work when needed and function properly.
 - The counterfeited fire extinguishers may not perform at all or may make fires worse if the substances they contain are not the proper fire suppressant materials for that type of fire.
 - These counterfeit dry chemical fire extinguishers discharge a yellowish colored, unknown powder and are filled with air. The powder does nothing to suppress fires and the air simply adds oxygen to the flames.
 - Counterfeit fire extinguishers are considered a high risk issue because the Safety Certification of the fire extinguishers / systems cannot be validated.

IDENTIFICATION OF COUNTERFEIT FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:

- Some of the more common methods to identify the counterfeits:
 - Handles may be made from improper materials or are an improper color:
 - Products from the OEMs currently being counterfeited have aluminum handles that are silver in color.
 - The counterfeits have been found with black or red plastic handles.
 - The bottom of the counterfeit cylinders may have a different configuration or design features:
 - Thicker, rolled or curved bottoms instead of the authentic straight, flush bottoms.
 - Authentic cylinders will have a date code stamped on the cylinder bottom.
 - Counterfeit fire extinguishers typically have lighter weight material construction.
 - Authentic cylinders are a one-piece design and do not show external welds:
 - On counterfeits, the quality of the welding may be poor and they may be welded in multiple or different locations, particularly around the base.
 - Pressure gauges look different or may be the wrong color. Gauges may be improperly assembled or may not function.
 - When the counterfeit cylinders are turned upside down, the cylinder contents may drop to the top.

- There may be multiple issues with the labels on counterfeit fire extinguishers:
 - The label background may not be exactly the same color or shade as an authentic label.
 - The counterfeit label may be screen printed and commonly has the same / identical serial numbers on different cylinders.
 - ✓ The easiest method to find these counterfeits is to check serial numbers, if more than one cylinder has the same serial number, it can be assumed that all of those cylinders are counterfeit.
 - Improper Underwriters' Laboratory (UL) label information.
 - Misspelled words and / or incorrect text fonts type on the label or instructions.
- Authentic labels have anti-counterfeiting features such as circles, letters or symbols cut into them.
 - Counterfeits labels will have those features printed on the labels instead of cut into the labels.
- Logos or manufacturers' symbols may be incorrect on the counterfeit cylinders:
 - Slightly different colors used.
 - The sizes or shapes of the logos may be somewhat different.

RESULTS:

- Findings:
 - Both the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and the General Services Administration (GSA) manage fire extinguishers.
 - It is believed that most of the counterfeit fire extinguishers were purchased locally OCONUS.
 - DLA has not received any Product Quality Deficiency Reports (PQDRs) about counterfeit fire extinguishers. In order to fully examine them, samples would have to be directed to the DLA Test Laboratories.
 - In conversations with the Government, a fire extinguisher manufacturer in the U.S. reported that there may have been some infiltration of counterfeit fire extinguishers into the continental U.S., mainly California.
 - Industry is aware of this issue and is taking anti-counterfeiting actions, as is the Fire Equipment Manufacturers' Association, (FEMA).
 - DLA-HQ is approaching the Dept of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), to discuss this.

RECOMMENDATION: DLA HQ will submit this fact sheet to the Services' Safety Centers for immediate notice to the Services. DLA strongly recommends that the practice of OCONUS local purchases of fire extinguishers be curtailed. DLA-HQ will research further in order to draft & submit an Agency Action Notice (AAN) to the Government-Industry Data Exchange Program (GIDEP). DLA Troop Support will perform selective stock screenings of high risk items (fire extinguishers most prone to counterfeiting) and will tighten up the Quality Assurance Letters of Instruction (QALIs) for DCMA source inspectors.

Counterfeit or Fake Extinguishers



Situation

- Currently identified several fake stock extinguishers

- Criteria to distinguish:

1. Improper handle color (Red vice Silver)
2. Improper Underwriter Laboratory label information
3. Identical serial numbers
4. Missing "S" stamped into label
5. No date stamped on bottom of cylinder
6. Lighter weight material construction
7. Improperly assembled pressure gauge
8. When turned upside down, contents drop to the top

All Have Identical Serial Numbers
K-094927



Reason for concern

- Fake's discharge a yellowish powder typical for an ABC extinguisher, for approximately the same amount of discharge time
- However, as you can see in the following pictures and video, they are not as effective and practically not effective at all.











Solutions

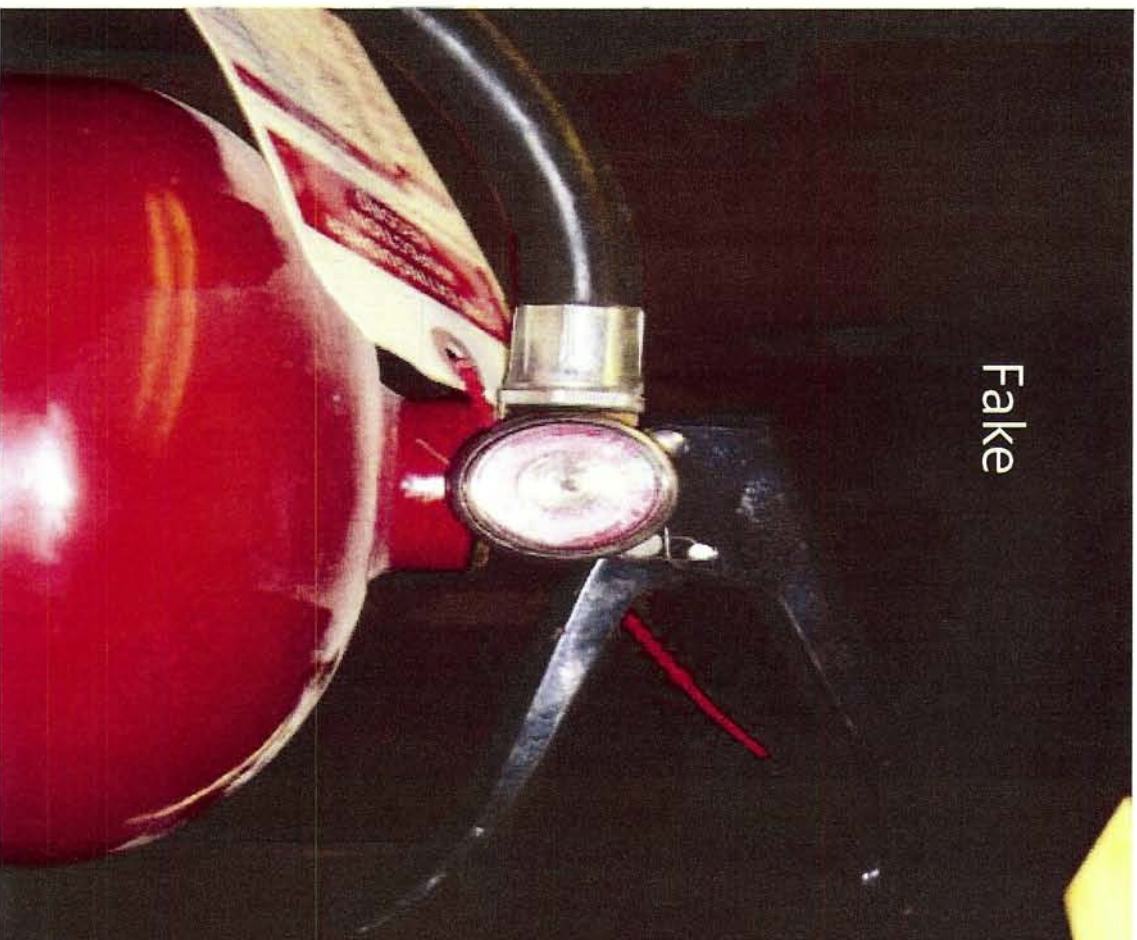
- Identify and remove all from service via available Fire Wardens and Fire Department Personnel
- Notify other FOB Fire Prevention personnel of their existence and how
- Recommend all new constructed Alaskan tents be screened for their existence and replacement
- Recommend procurement personnel be advised of their existence and make recommendation for replacement of all counterfeit extinguishers for future construction by provider



One of these is a counterfeit fire extinguisher? Can you tell?

Different handles

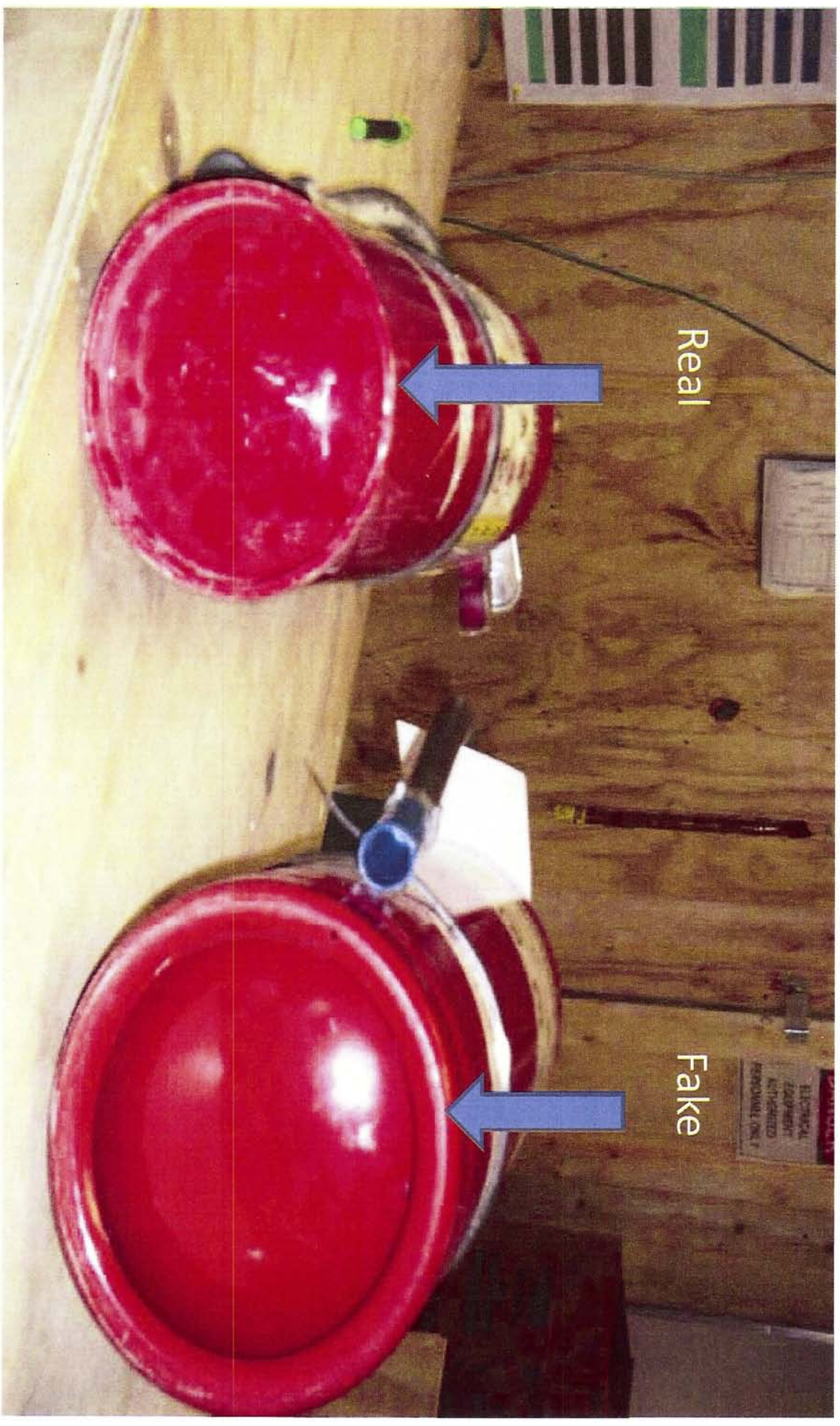
Fake



Real



Difference in bottom



Look at the labels

Real

Circles are cut into label



Fake

Circles are printed on label



Real Buckeye



Examples of local brand extinguishers

We are replacing these at the request of the Camp Leatherneck Fire Department since the quality of them is unknown.



**THE “REAL”
AND**

**THE “REAL FAKE”
FIRE**

EXTINGUISHERS

REAL

All Buckeyes have the
born on date stamped
into the bottom of the
cylinder



FAKE



REAL

FAKE

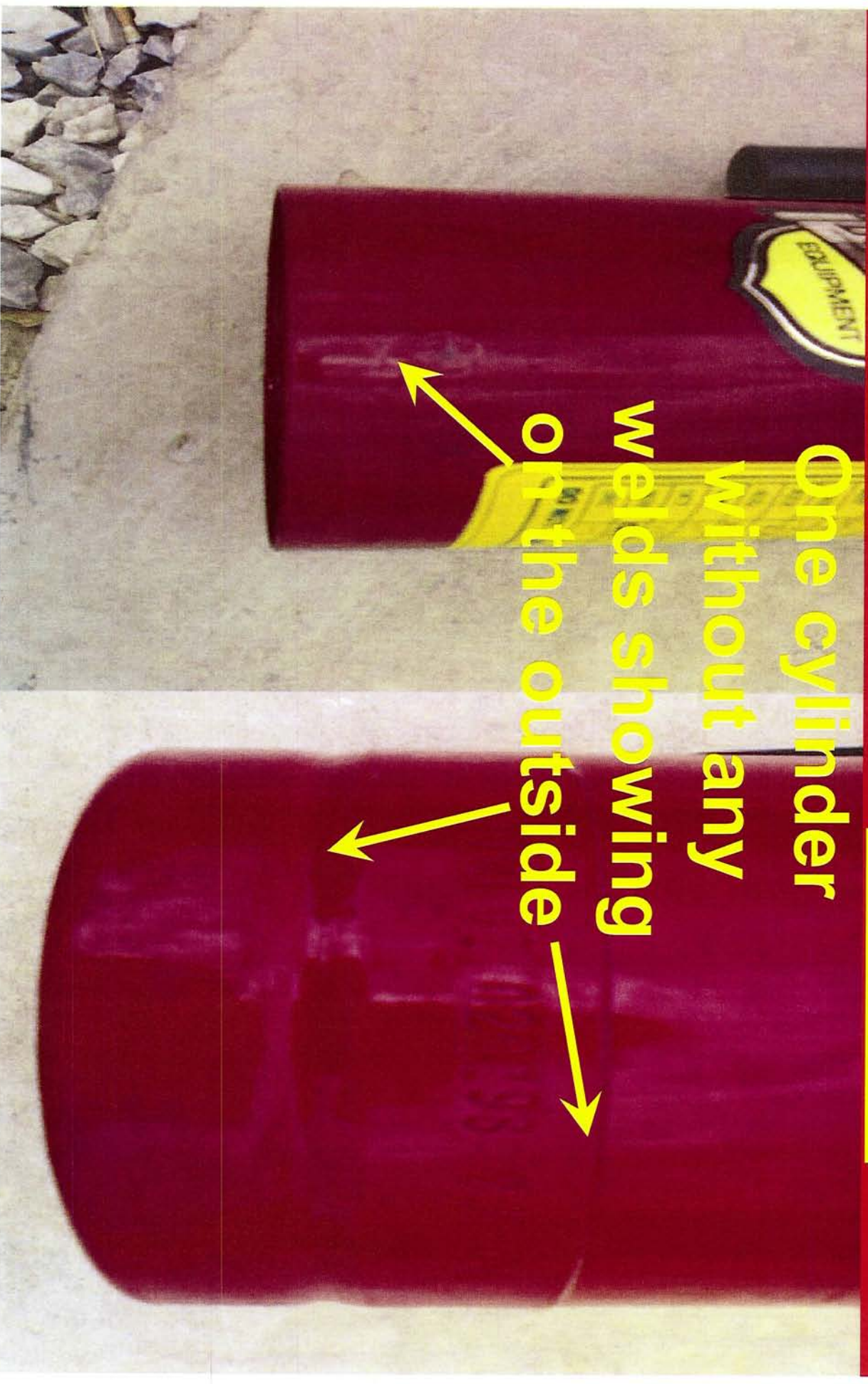
**The bottom rim
is always strait
down, there are
no curves**



REAL

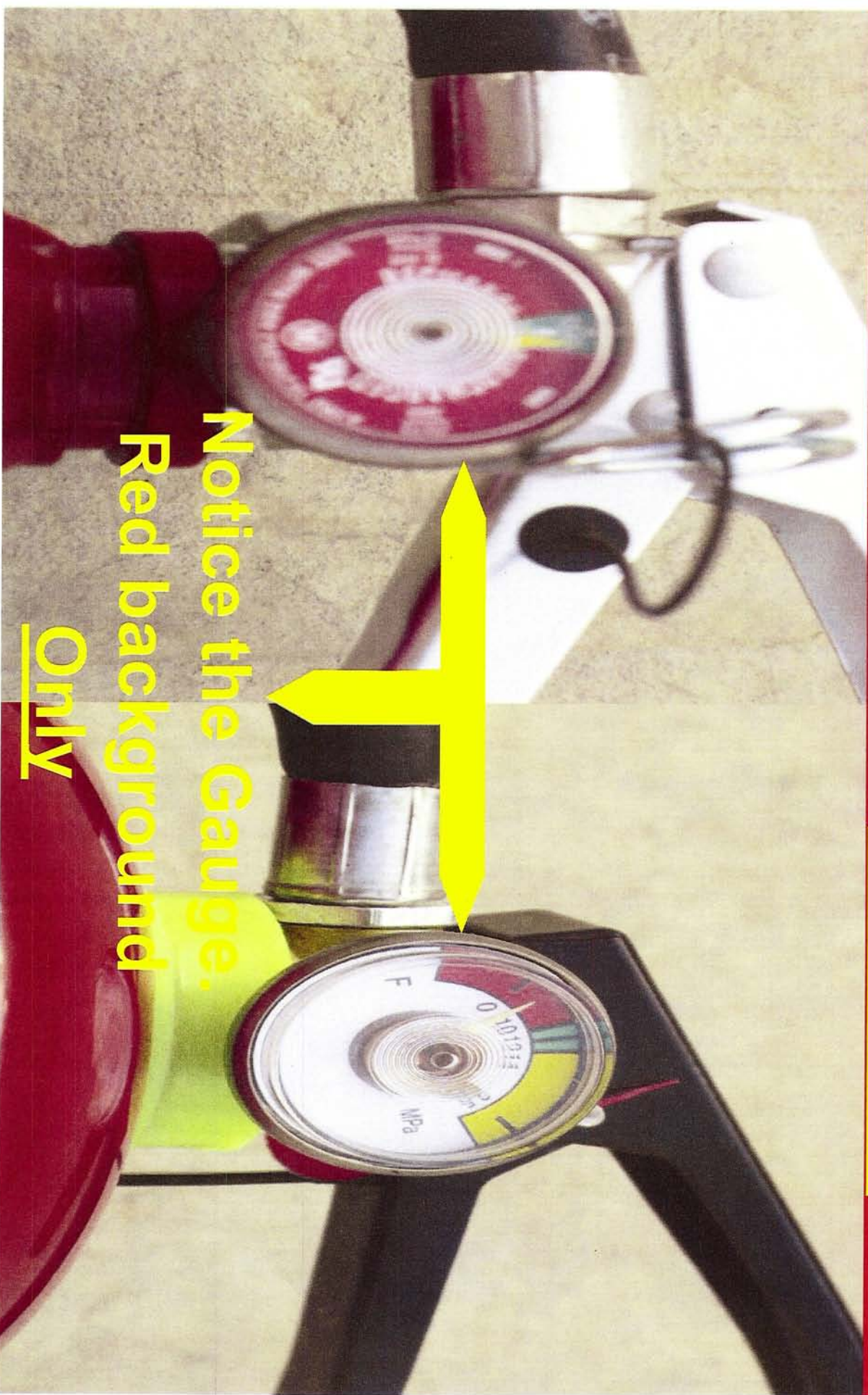
FAKE

One cylinder
without any
welds showing
on the outside



REAL

FAKE



Notice the Gauge.
Red background

Only

REAL

FAKE

Remember Silver Handles made
out of Aluminum are indicators of
True Buckeyes



REAL

There is a

Different serial
for each
extinguisher

ZK-944720

FAKE

Screen

Printed Label

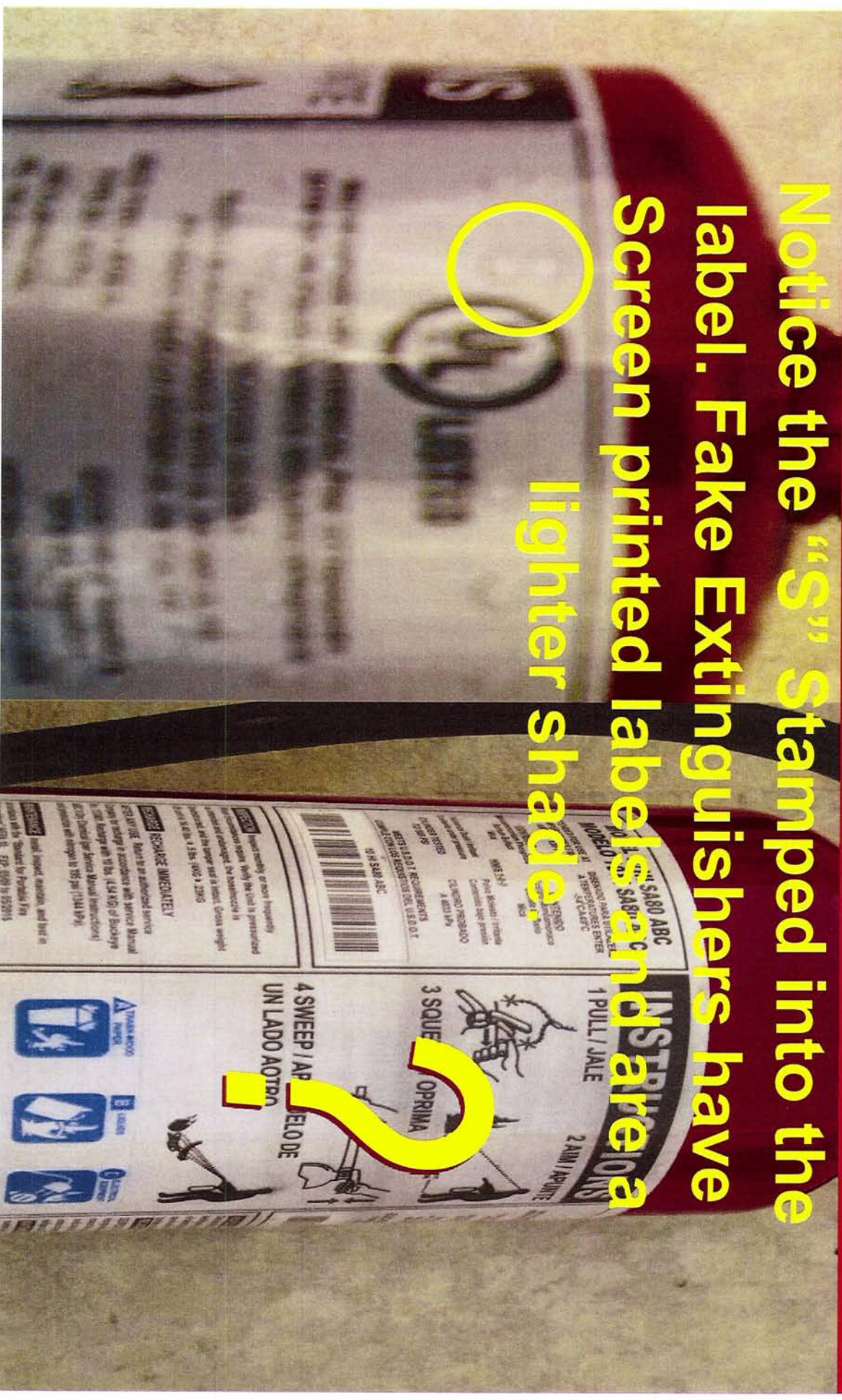


YM-476222

REAL

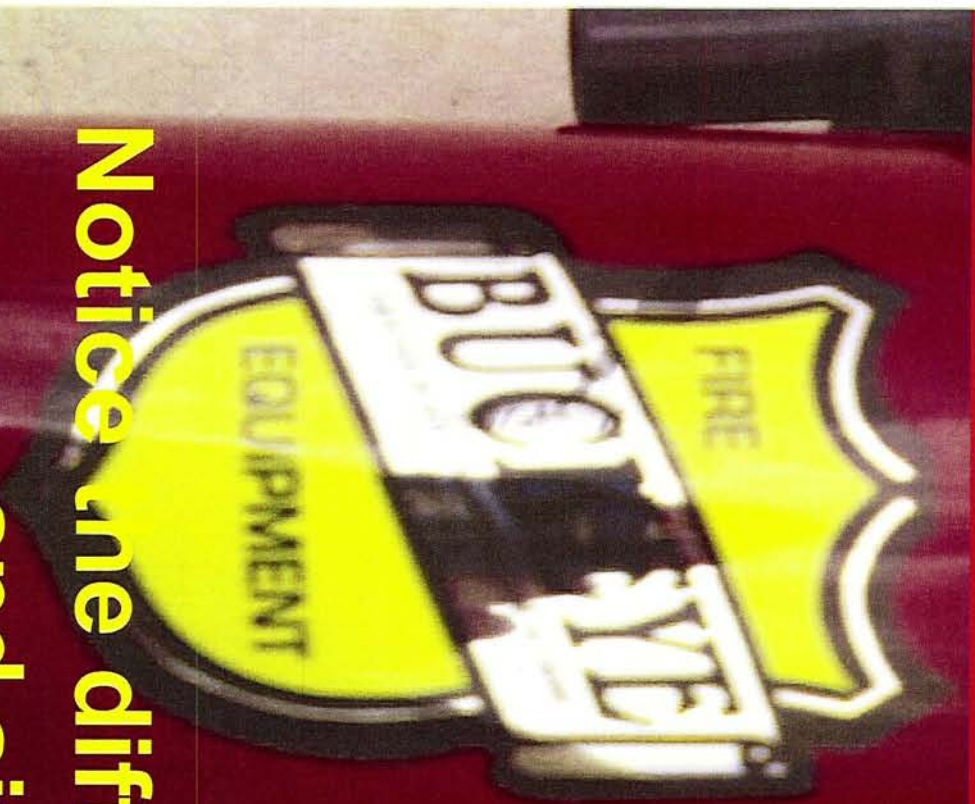
FAKE

Notice the “S” Stamped into the label. Fake Extinguishers have Screen printed labels and are a lighter shade.



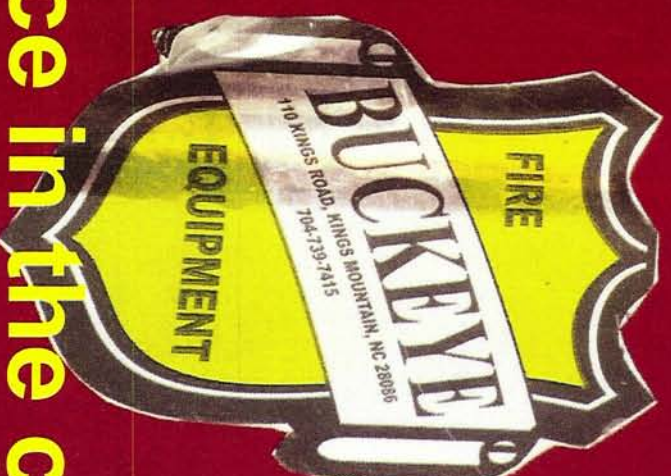
REAL

FAKE



Notice the difference in the color

and size of labels.



REAL vs. FAKE

- There have been several fake buckeye extinguishers found at Bagram.
- Most found are in groups with identical serial numbers
- If you run across a “FAKE” extinguisher please contact your local fire department immediately to exchange for a REAL one.
- The Fake extinguishers are filled using air which will actually help accelerate the fire

ALWAYS THINK SAFETY FIRST!!



**Underwriters
Laboratories Inc.®**

UL ANTI-COUNTERFEITING

Stopping Counterfeiters in Their Tracks

Our mission is public safety and we take that responsibility seriously. Because goods with counterfeit UL Marks can be hazardous, UL takes all legal steps possible to prevent products bearing a counterfeit UL Mark from entering the stream of commerce.

Who we are

Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) is an independent, not-for-profit product safety certification and standards organization. We have been helping to get safer products to the marketplace since 1894. The familiar UL Mark of safety appears on more than 20 billion products annually.

What we do

Because consumers, retailers, regulators, manufacturers and distributors have come to rely on the UL Mark of safety, we've invested in building a dedicated team of professionals whose sole responsibility is to oversee UL's efforts to protect our intellectual property. Since 1995, this team has worked with law enforcement and educated customs officials globally about how to recognize legitimately UL labeled products as well as implementing anti-counterfeiting measures as an element of UL's Marks.

Why we invest in this work

Many of the counterfeit products entering the global market can directly and dramatically affect the safety of the people who use them. UL practices a zero-tolerance policy regarding counterfeit Marks. UL does not consent to the import, export or reworking of seized merchandise carrying a counterfeit UL Mark. When products bearing a counterfeit UL Mark are discovered, they are confiscated and disposed of in compliance with appropriate U.S. codes and regulations protecting intellectual property.

The cost of product counterfeiting is estimated at \$500 billion (USD) annually, or roughly 5 to 7 percent of global trade.

(continued)

If you encounter a product that you suspect carries a counterfeit UL Mark, please contact us via e-mail at anticounterfeiting@us.ul.com.

How to identify a UL certification Mark

There are four basic elements of a UL certification Mark. Although there may be some variation within the elements, these four elements are commonly present in a legitimate UL certification Mark:

1. UL's registered trademark.
2. The word "Listed" or "Classified".
3. Product identity describing the product.
(NOTE: may be optional if the UL Mark is molded on the product)
4. Proprietary four-digit, alphanumeric control code or issue number,
which is a sequence of numbers that may begin with one or two letters.

UL certification Marks may be found on an actual label on a product, or they can be molded, cast, die-stamped or silk-screened onto a product. Often, due to size limitations, the complete, four-element certification Mark cannot be used on a product. In these cases, the complete certification Mark will appear on the smallest unit packaging, with UL's registered trademark included on the product itself.

How to identify products that may not be legitimately UL certified

There are a few situations that may tip you off that you're seeing a product that has not been legitimately certified by UL:

- Any product whose UL marking does not contain the four required elements of the UL certification Mark.
- Any product that references UL on the carton or the product, but has no company name, trademark, trade name or any other designation required for UL certified products.
- Cheap, low-quality workmanship or packaging.
- UL Marks with the letters "UL" side-by-side, missing control or issue numbers, or the words "Approved" or "Pending" instead of "Listed" or "Classified."
- Product packaging with numerous grammatical or spelling errors.
- Legitimately certified products will generally include product manuals providing applicable safety warnings and instructions for use, care and maintenance of the products. Lack of appropriate documentation may be an indicator that a product may not be actually certified by UL.
- Legitimate manufacturers are proud of their products and want to hear from users. They commonly provide a toll-free number, Web site or other information that can be used to report a problem with a product. Lack of such contact information should put you on your guard.